

**2004 Bureau of Reclamation's Commissioner's Water Conservation Award
Regional Water Efficiency Program of
Regional Water Authority**

The Regional Water Authority (RWA) is a joint powers authority of 18 water suppliers. One of their main objectives is to implement the Water Forum agreement to provide strategies for regional water supply reliability and Lower American River water qualities through 2030. Water Use Efficiency Best Management Practices (BMPs) are an integral element of the Water Forum Agreement and a major program of the RWA. The RWA's Efficiency Program is designed to directly implement measures to satisfy urban water conservation BMPs and to assist local water suppliers.

Entering its fourth year, the RWA Water Efficiency Program has shown success based on solid leadership, water efficiency expertise, and support by its member agencies. It is anticipated that continued cooperative relationship with the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) will achieve success. The following are examples of efforts which have or are being implemented by the RWA with the assistance of the Mid-Pacific Regional and Folsom Area Offices.

2003 and 2004 Landscape Irrigation Efficiency Improvements:

- Provided irrigation audits to 20 schools and parks in eastern Sacramento County for the San Juan Water District.
- Utilized the irrigation audit results to successfully apply for \$1.15 million in state funds for irrigation equipment upgrades. With 15 participating water suppliers, including all local Central Valley Project (CVP) contractors, the project will include approximately 175 sites of 1 acre and larger, and will save approximately 545 acre feet per year.
- Provided and/or cosponsored irrigation efficiency workshops for homeowners and green industry professionals, which included:
 - Eco Landscape Symposium
 - Two-day Landscape Auditor Certification Workshop
 - Three Landscape Irrigation Workshops with the Irrigation Association
 - Spring and autumn series of classes for homeowners
 - Sacramento Valley Nursery Expo
- Marketed the Cooperative Point of Sale Irrigation Efficiency Project to promote attractive, healthy, and water efficient landscapes. This cooperative project included the U.C. Cooperative Extension, Reclamation, six water suppliers, and growers and retailers of landscape plants in Sacramento and Placer counties. The objective was to educate homeowners to use landscape designs that group plants with similar water requirements into hydrozones.

The key program elements:

1. Encourage wholesale growers to display visible tags on shrubs and trees to describe the plant water requirements;
2. Provide nursery retailers, for distribution without cost to customers, with 11,000 copies of:
 - a. *Watering Tips for Beautiful Gardens*, glossy cards that explained the low, medium, and high water requirement system.
 - b. *Rules of Thumb for Waterwise Gardening*, a colorful booklet that described the importance of appropriate landscape design, plant selection, and irrigation systems.
3. Organize follow-up customer surveys, which determined that:
 - a. Customers find plant tags and point-of-sale information to be useful.
 - b. Automatic sprinklers and drip irrigation are the top two methods of irrigation.
 - c. The *Sunset Garden Book* and "nursery staff" are customers' favored sources of gardening information.

These marketing tools will be utilized with future irrigation efficiency projects.

School Education

- Initiated pilot project for school education programs using a Reclamation grant. Subsequently partnered with the Sacramento Stormwater Management Program to cosponsor presentations on water efficiency and surface water pollution prevention to 15,000 students per year for 3 years.
- Sponsored water education lessons through the Sacramento Bee Newspapers to 6,000 students annually. Revised and updated materials to meet Sacramento Valley conditions.

Toilet Replacement

- Implemented a toilet replacement rebate project with eight water suppliers and co-funded by the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District (SRCSD).

Public Outreach

- Provided a variety of outreach messages through radio advertising, public events, TV news' interviews, radio feature programs, California Life newspaper contributions, press releases, internet site, and newspaper advertising.
- Leveraged outreach through cooperative mailings with Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) and SRCSD.

Services to Businesses

- Installed through the "Rinse and Save Program" 475 water efficient spray nozzles and surveyed water appliances at 350 restaurants. Project savings were estimated to be 135 million gallons (414 acre feet) of water and 144,300 therms of natural gas. The spray valves were free to the customers of the 17 participating water suppliers. The next phase, which is intended to install 600 additional valves for 460 customers to save an additional 170 million gallons (521 acre feet) of water and 146,000 therms of natural gas, has already begun.
- Presented water savings workshop for building operators at SMUD.

Conservation Coordinator Training

- Broadened the knowledge and improved the effectiveness of local and regional water conservation coordinators through:
 - Certification workshops.
 - CALFED presentations on proposed water use data collection.
 - Water loss reduction workshops.
 - Water Forum BMP objectives training.
- Supported local water efficiency efforts through frequent advice to conservation coordinators and by engaging experts from California and other parts of the United States.

Distribution System Water Loss Control

- Sponsored a two-day Water Loss Control Workshop featuring the new International Water Association methodology to estimate actual water losses and to pinpoint the location of leaks.
- Obtained state grants and implemented projects with CVP contractors, the Placer County Water Agency, and the City of Folsom to identify and repair leaks on 66 miles of pipeline, thereby saving 750 acre feet per year.